



Infrastructure Provider's Roundtable

An Assessment of the Impacts of the California Environmental Quality Act on the Provision of Critical Infrastructure

SUMMARY

The Keston Institute for Infrastructure of the University of Southern California proposes to convene two roundtable discussions among infrastructure providers regarding the impact of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) on the provision of critical infrastructure. The purpose of the roundtables will be to get input from infrastructure providers regarding their experience as to whether, and to what degree, CEQA has resulted in improved environmental performance, as well as whether, and to what degree, CEQA has resulted in project delays and cost increases. The roundtables will be designed to elicit input from a broad range of infrastructure interests representing both the public and private sectors. The first roundtable discussion will be held in the Los Angeles area and the second in a location to accommodate those in the Bay area and Central Valley. The purpose of the roundtables is to get the views of infrastructure providers on how CEQA affects the provision of infrastructure and their recommendations for actions that could be taken that would shorten project delivery times and save money without compromising environmental stewardship goals. The results of the roundtable discussions will be summarized and provided to the Advisory Group on CEQA Reform that has been convened by Resources Secretary Chrisman.

BACKGROUND

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was enacted in 1970 to require government agencies to consider the environmental consequences of their actions before approving plans, policies, or projects. Its purpose was to ensure the identification of potential adverse environmental impacts, ways in which these impacts could be avoided or reduced, and to provide public disclosure when government action resulted in significant environmental effects. Over the ensuing three decades, CEQA has been applied to numerous activities and projects in the public and private domain and has a long and mixed legacy of results. Infrastructure providers have a long history of compliance with CEQA and therefore are well situated to provide information regarding how CEQA has impacted delivery of critical infrastructure.

PROPOSED FORMAT

Approximately 12-18 representatives from a broad range of infrastructure service providers will be convened for a one-half day meeting to obtain information on the impact of CEQA on the delivery of infrastructure projects. Prior to the meeting, a set of focus questions will be distributed to the attendees to group issues and create a discussion document. This document will be used to facilitate discussion during the meeting with the goal of identifying infrastructure providers' views regarding problem areas and suggested procedural remedies. To the extent possible, instances of actual schedule delay and cost impacts will be described and discussed.

WORK PRODUCT

The product of this activity will be a report that describes the impacts of CEQA on the provision of infrastructure as identified by the roundtable discussants and which suggests modifications to the relevant sections of the Act or its implementation guidelines. The report will be provided to the Advisory Group on CEQA Reform that has been convened by Resources Secretary Chrisman.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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